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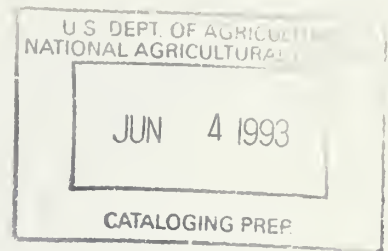


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RECORD OF DECISION
USDA Forest Service

WILLAMETTE PASS ALPINE WINTER SPORTS SITE
Willamette and Deschutes National Forests
Lane and Klamath Counties, Oregon

Final Environmental Impact Statement



It is my decision to select Alternative IV as the conceptual future management plan for the National Forest System lands considered in this study. Based on this decision, the Forest Service will issue a Special Use Permit authorizing use on approximately 1100 acres of land included in the study area. At full development, facilities would allow utilization by approximately 4000 skiers at one time (SAOT).

This Environmental Impact Statement has been developed to address the expansion facilities proposed by Willamette Pass Ski Corporation in the Master Plan submitted in March, 1983. Scoping commenced in October, 1983 and continued through November, 1984. A total of 332 people responded in writing to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of which 230 supported Alternative IV; 10 favored more developed proposals and 74 respondents favored no action or southside expansion only. An additional 1,744 people signed petitions in support of Alternative IV. Public comment during scoping and in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement focused on five key issues:

1. Effect on water quality - particularly on Gold Lake Bog Research Natural Area
2. Effect on wildlife - especially on deer, elk and wolverine
3. Effect on dispersed and developed recreation opportunities.
4. Effect on visual resources
5. Effect on the social-economic environment - particularly, public demand for additional downhill skiing, secondary revenue and economic feasibility of alternatives.

The six alternatives considered were:

Alternative I (1851 SAOT) - Under this proposal, the management of existing and proposed facilities would remain the same as approved for Phase I development accommodating 1851 skiers at one time. This is the no action or no change alternative.

Alternative II (3135 SAOT) - This alternative would allow development of one lift on the south side of Eagle Peak serving 3135 skiers at one time.

Alternative III (3284 SAOT) - This proposal would permit development of one lift on the north slope of Eagle Peak accommodating 3284 skiers at one time.

Alternative IV (3994 SAOT) - This is the selected alternative. It will permit development of two lifts on the north slopes of Eagle and West Peaks, as well as one lift on the south side of West Peak serving 3994 skiers at one time and a Summit Lodge serving 426 skiers at one time.

Alternative V (4513 SAOT, Willamette Pass Ski Corporation Proposal) -This alternative would provide for the development of three lifts on the north slopes of Eagle and West Peaks accommodating 4513 skiers at one time; a Summit Lodge serving 426 skiers at one time; and overnight accommodations in the south parking lot containing 30 units.

Alternative VI (5690 SAOT) - This is the maximum development alternative. It would permit development of three lifts on the north slopes and two lifts on the south slopes of Eagle and West Peaks serving 5690 skiers at one time; a Summit Lodge serving 426 skiers at one time; and overnight accommodations in Sleepy Hollow containing 30 units.

When considering the physical and biological effects on the National Forest System lands to which the decision applies, Alternative I is identified as environmentally preferred. Alternative I would cause the least disruption to the natural environment.

Alternative VI would provide maximum utilization of the recreation resource opportunities and increased economic benefit to the area.

Alternative IV provides a balance of concern for the physical and biological components of the human environment in addition to concerns for social and economic welfare. Those considerations which led to the selection of Alternative IV are as follows:

- Protective measures designed to prevent or reduce erosion to acceptable levels during and after facility construction. These measures include constructing minimum standard access roads, restricting equipment on steep slopes during logging and lift construction and requiring prompt revegetation.
- Protective measures designed to maintain ground and surface water quality.
- State and county requirements for sewage disposal facilities at existing base area and proposed Summit Lodge.
- Protective measures designed to reduce risk of diesel spills. Mitigation measures focus on the location, design and construction of storage tanks, requiring top-drive power generators for chairlifts, monitoring and transporting requirements and contingency spill plans.
- Improves forage for deer and elk.
- Protective measures designed to reduce displacement of deer and elk. These measures include restricting use of access roads, limiting construction season, and closing Summit Lodge and chairlifts on north slopes to public use during the summer.
- Alternative IV provides for a diversity of alpine and nordic facilities including a good mix of beginner, intermediate and advanced runs and 5 miles of groomed nordic trails.
- Provides for an extended winter season and more consistent and higher quality snow conditions for skiing by allowing access to higher elevation and north slopes.

- Allows construction of minimum standard catchline road to clear material from ski lifts and runs; construct and service lifts; provide a safety catchline; and serve as a groomed nordic track.
- Improves scenic quality and skiability of Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail at the expense of the permittee.
- Maintains visual quality as seen from Gold, Odell and Waldo Lakes; Mt. Fuji and Mt. Ray.
- The cities of Eugene, Florence, Oakridge and Springfield as well as the Lane Council of Governments and a State Representative have expressed support for expansion as identified in the selected alternative.
- Expansion of Willamette Pass Ski Area will have an overall positive influence on Hoodoo and Mt. Bachelor Ski Areas.
- Studies as well as actual skier use over the last three years indicate that skier visits will increase in the next ten to fifteen years to support the expanded development.
- Expansion will provide added employment for local communities and secondary revenue for Lane County.
- The National Forest System lands in the study area can be developed in an environmentally acceptable manner. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted.

No major adverse environmental effects will result directly from the Federal action except precluding future Wilderness designation for the existing 700 acre unroaded area which would be developed. Secondary effects will be the reduction of wolverine habitat (by 1.5 square miles of a 60 square mile winter territory of an individual wolverine or roughly 2.5%) and alteration of the visual quality as seen from Maiden Peak.

Alternative IV is consistent with implementation direction established in Willamette National Forest Multiple Use Land Management Timber Management, Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1977 and the Deschutes National Forest Land Management Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1978. The decision to implement Alternative IV will be incorporated into the planning process for the Willamette and Deschutes National Forests Land Use Management Plans.

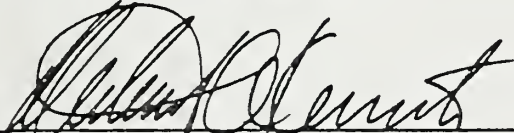
Based on concerns expressed as input to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the following actions will be taken in implementing this decision:

1. Require phased development of additional facilities beginning with the design and construction of lift D and catchline road.
2. Require the permittee to demonstrate a market need for additional phases based on updated use information and trends; economic feasibility; and evidence of cash or assets to finance development.

3. Approve Summit Lodge in concept. Require permittee to demonstrate public need, economic feasibility and environmental suitability as part of an environmental analysis prior to design and construction.

The decision will be implemented no sooner than 30 days after the notice of filing the Final Environmental Impact Statement appears in the Federal Register.

This decision is subject to administrative appeal in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 211.18.



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4/29/85

DATE



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